

FIRST ISSUE 95 PENCE

FRANCE 15F.F. AMERICA \$2.95

Escape



INTERVIEWS

SERGE CLERC IN A HURRY AND BANTER WITH BIFF

PAUL BIGNELL — EDDIE CAMPBELL — PHIL ELLIOTT — HUNT EMERSON — MYRA HANCOCK
DAVE HARWOOD — RIAN HUGHES — BOB JOHNSON — PAUL JOHNSON and SHAKY KANE

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MYSTERY AND WONDER
WITH BAZOOKA JOE
AND WILSON
SHAKESPEARE REKINDLED
THE KAT FROM
COCONINO COUNTY
PLUS THE REET PETITE
POSTCARD SET

Escape



An Independent British Story-Strip Magazine
LONDON — PARIS — NEW YORK

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SERGE CLERC IN A HURRY AND BANTER WITH BIFF

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SETTING THE TONE

We needed a clearer definition of the blurred word 'Comics' (not a new idea). We decided on a positive approach — no rigid formulas or gothic macho fantasies. Most people in Britain put 'Comics' down as hack writing, cliché drawing, strictly for kids. Some go to the other extreme of mindless exultation, losing all sense of discernment. After all 'Comic' simply means funny, so the word is inadequate. To tack on the word 'Adult' has resulted in a style of magazine suitable for only some adults, glossy comics barely containing their airbrushed breasts, leaving little room for genuine content.

One of our ideas was BD or Bande Dessinée — a French term meaning literally 'Band of Drawings' or 'Strip'. Bandes Dessinées are an accepted and lively part of popular culture in France, read and enjoyed by millions (not just some adults and children). This has been largely due to their more varied and subtle approach to Storytelling.

But BD alone was too French a term. We chose **United Kingdom Bande Dessinée — UKBD** — to combine the best influences of European Bandes Dessinées and American comics — and to be the best of British too! **UKBD** — a vital form of personal expression. One artist/writer can tell a story and decide how it looks, without advanced technology. It's a medium anyone can use — you too!

Here you'll find Story-Strips presenting **UKBD** artists and writers to an International audience. New British Strips, New British Styles. Graphic Narratives balancing the verbal and the visual. Features and Interviews presenting BD from all over the world to British readers, together with articles on other related subjects. There is such a variety of Story-Strips around — they are a part of everyone's daily life. They appear in newspapers and Sunday supplements; in annuals, illustrated books and albums available from your newsagent, bookshop and library. Their modern mythologies have been adapted into films, musicals, animated cartoons, serials, advertising and videos.

This is just the beginning. We know we can only direct the magazine — the rest comes from the people who appear in it and most of all from the people who read it! If you like ESCAPE, tell your friends — if you don't, tell us!

ESCAPE... is the survival instinct. Will you ESCAPE From it or to it? •

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COVER BY PHIL ELLIOTT

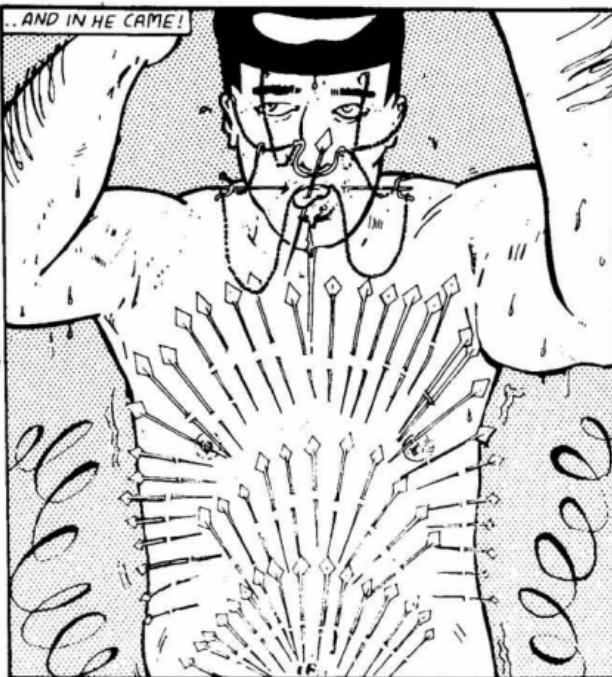
'A tale from GIMBLEY'







ACTUALLY IT WAS JACK WHO WAS TO DO THE PERFORMANCE - AND THE FOLLOWING DAY IN FRONT OF A SELECT AUDIENCE HE PREPARED FOR HIS ENTRANCE....



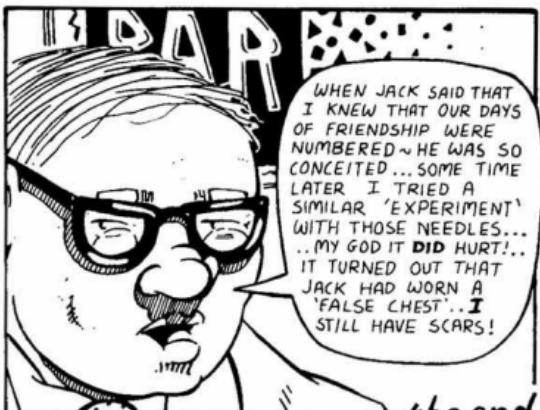
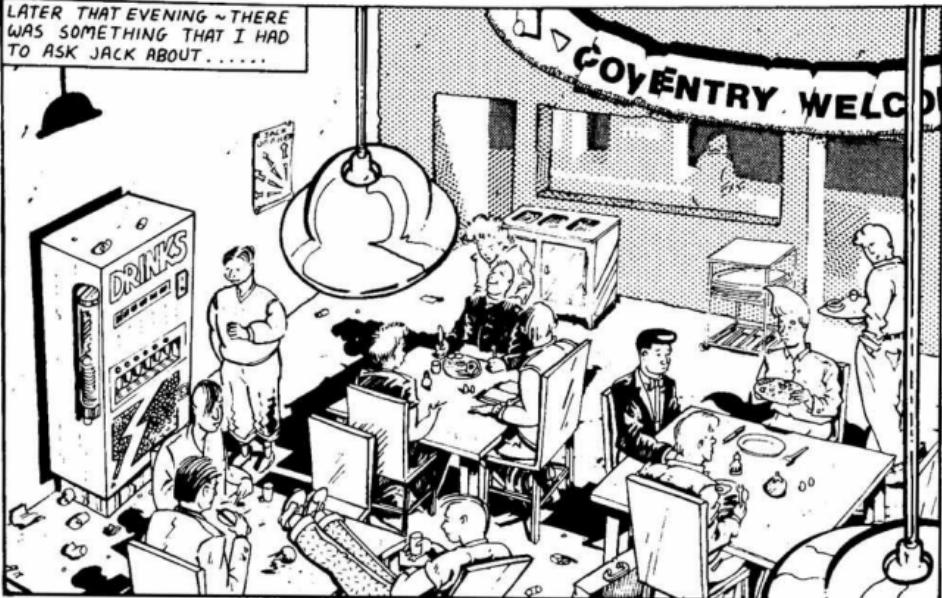
THIS WAS JACK'S **BEST YET**!.. I WAS SO TAKEN ABACK THAT I ALMOST FORGOT MY PART IN HIS DISPLAY... EACH OF THE NEEDLES IN HIS CHEST HAD BEEN TUNED TO A PARTICULAR NOTE AND IT WAS UP TO ME TO PLAY HIS PIECE OF MUSIC~HIS OWN "COMPOSITION OF HUMILITY"



THE PIECE WAS ALSO SIMULTANEOUSLY BROADCAST IN STRATEGIC PLACES IN AND AROUND COVENTRY, SO THAT MOST OF THE CITY COULD SHARE IN WHAT WAS FAST BECOMING A UNIQUE EVENT IN THE WORLD OF ART...



LATER THAT EVENING ~ THERE
WAS SOMETHING THAT I HAD
TO ASK JACK ABOUT



the end.



The Kat from Coconino County

In Coconino County, a make-believe district of Arizona, full of unusual desert outcrops and stark abstract landscapes, a curious love-triangle exists between dog, cat and mouse. Offisa Pup protects and secretly loves Krazy Kat, whose sex was never exactly clear. Krazy dreams only of Ignatz, who in turn hurls bricks at her head, clear proof of hostility, but interpreted by Krazy as tokens of affection.

George Herriman created Krazy Kat during the heyday of American newspaper cartooning in the early years of this century, but his innovations have been adopted by many of today's story-strip artists from around the world.



GEORGE HERRIMAN

Herriman was born in New Orleans on August 22nd 1880 to first generation Greek immigrants. He moved to New York when he was 20, and by the following year, now married, joined the **New York World** a Hearst newspaper, as a Staff Artist. William Randolph Hearst founded his newspaper company in 1887 and published the first American newspaper strip, Richard Outcault's 'Yellow Kid', in 1896. He pioneered daily newspaper strips and gave Herriman his first opportunities.

Krazy Kat started life as slapstick mouse-and-cat adventures, running beneath his daily strip, 'The Family Upstairs', in the **New York Journal**. It first appeared in its own right on October 28th 1913 and evolved through a variety of formats to the

innovative graphics and poetic wit of its full-colour Sunday pages. Despite the fact that Krazy Kat made no money for the national chain of papers in the Hearst syndicate after the 1920's, Hearst insisted on the strip being run, later on the Arts pages, even when his editors refused, and, recognising Herriman's genius, gave him a lifetime contract.

Herriman delights in visual and verbal play. He shifts backgrounds from frame to frame to suit the mood and story. His narration and dialogue brim over with puns, alliterations and nonsense words, reminiscent of Edward Lear. Krazy's personal brand of perfected idiocy and misunderstanding leads to some charming verbal blunders such as '*telefoam*', '*boom kimpennions*' and '*never the trains shall meat*'. In one example, Krazy rushes off to the doctor on discovering she has a 'profile' on the side of her face, only to discover to her alarm that she has one on the other side as well.

The strip has received acclaim among intellectuals like Gilbert Seldes, in his book, 'The 7 Lively Arts', John Alden Carpenter, who devised a Krazy Kat ballet, and E.E. Cummings, poet and compiler of a book collection of the strip in 1969. Even President Wilson would read it before

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© KING FEATURES SYNDICATE





entering his cabinet meetings. Film director Frank Capra once asked Herriman about the Kat's sex, and he replied that Krazy was like a sprite or an elf with no sex, free to butt into anything.

Usually Herriman chose not to be pinned down on his philosophy; a gentle retiring man, he avoided publicity and in his later years drew his strips from his hacienda-style home that he shared with his family in the Hollywood Hills of Los Angeles. When he died on April 25th 1944, leaving sketches for only a week's worth of strips, Krazy Kat could never be continued; only Herriman's elusive whimsy and subtlety could bring Krazy to life.

HEIRS of the KAT

His innovations were directly related to: E C Segar's POPEYE, Walt Disney's MICKEY MOUSE, and Otto Mesmer's FELIX The CAT. After Herriman, many artists have been inspired by him. In the early '50s, Jack Kent's KING AROO; American Underground strips of the '60s like Dan O'Neil's ODD BODKINS and Bobby London's DIRTY DUCK; and outside the States in recent years, Nikita Mandryka's CONCOMBRE MASQUE from France and from Barcelona Mariscal's FERMIN & PIKER, as seen in RAW.

Another RAW Artist, Mark Beyer, considers Krazy Kat to be *'one of the two or three best comic strips in the history of comics so far. I've felt influenced by Herriman as part of my historical vocabulary. He gave me the freedom to change backgrounds — he opened it right up.'*

From Britain, Hunt Emerson — *'It influenced my early strips a lot. Firstly by giving me the nerve to make the words say anything I felt like. Then the way Herriman changed his backgrounds. And the dotted "O"s. They were pure affectation at first but have now become inextricably part of my comics. I like to think of them as a tip-of-the-hat to Herriman, who taught me that comics can be poetry as well as pulp — even if very rarely!'*

'People don't know what they want. And if they get an entirely new taste of something that's good, they'll want it until they find something better. But we've got to give them the initial taste before they start clamouring for more.'
George Herriman.

KRAZY KAT BOOKS

Many books on Krazy Kat are now out of print. Reprints can be found in: **'The Smithsonian Collection of Newspaper Strips'** — Bill Blackbeard and Martin Williams. The Smithsonian Institute Press; and **'Great Comic Cats'** — Bill Blackbeard and Malcolm Whyte. Both are US imports available from specialist outlets. We have news of a **'definitive'** Krazy Kat book being researched by Patrick MacDonald in New Jersey. It will feature an extensive Herriman biography and examples of all his strip work. Already his research has unearthed a short-lived predecessor of Krazy named Alexander the Cat which ran in the **'Wichita Eagle'** in Kansas in 1910. His book will be out Christmas '83 at the earliest. ●



CALCULUS CAT

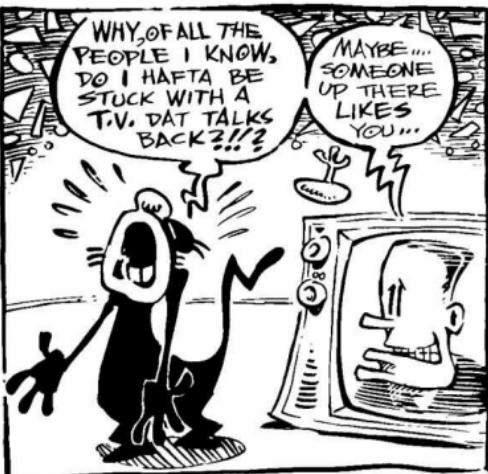


= HUNT EMERSON

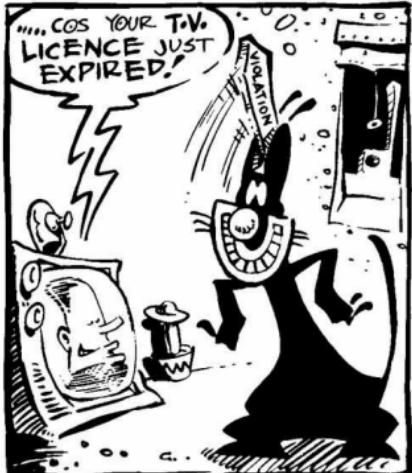












©SERGE CLERC

Hello...I must be going!

Interview by Paul Gravett September 27th 1982.

Serge Clerc named 'Le Dessinateur Espion' — the spy artist. Creator of BD Rock. Known for his illustration work in **NME** but more renowned in Europe for his work in **Metal Hurlant**. Clerc has been drawing since he was 13, when he would amaze his teachers in his hometown, Roannes, with his artistic talents. Now 25, he lives in a cluttered apartment in Paris. His latest book, **Mémoires de l'Espion**, compiles his illustration work from the last few years into a 160 page large format paperback, with a short story by J.L.Bocquet.

During a stay in Britain, Serge Clerc visited a comic convention in a London hotel; afterwards I talked to him over afternoon tea in the restaurant.

Serge had bought particular sixties American comics. The only new comic that he liked was **The Rocketeer** by Dave Stevens from Pacific Comics. I asked him why?

Serge: Yes, I just buy **Rocketeer** its the only thing I've seen for sometime that has come from America. There's been nothing good coming from America. I think for the last four or five years the best comics are coming from Europe and most of them from France.

Paul: I've heard the way that Jean-Pierre Dionnet discovered you. You were about sixteen when he saw your drawings and soon after grabbed you for **Metal Hurlant**, even before you'd taken your exams.

S: Oh yes, but I left just a few months before.

P: You have been working for how long?

S: Seven years. I like being in **Metal Hurlant**

it's the only magazine I'd like to be in. It's not my style to be anywhere else.

P: Many people are familiar with your work in **NME**. Regularly there has been a new Clerc illustration. How did this come about?

S: Neil Spencer edits **NME** and I met him in Paris, he asked me to do some drawings, I don't know how he knew my work, maybe because he was with the start of **Metal Hurlant**. I don't know if people are familiar with my early drawings in **Metal Hurlant**. He said it was good, **Rocke**. I was about the only guy who drew Rock and Roll at that time.

P: What comics did you read when you were young?

S: For me the word comics is American, it's superheroes. The word for me is **Bande Dessinée** ... **BD**. I read **Pilote**, but **Spirou** I

liked very much but not so much an influence, it's more an Yves Chaland influence, it very much helped him.

P: How do you, Yves Chaland and Luc Cornillon connect?

S: We met in Paris. But before we were drawing professionally in the same area of Paris, I was doing a fanzine called **Absolutely Live**, they were doing a fanzine called **L'Unité de Valeur**. Later we met when we worked for **Metal Hurlant** so we were close and we became friends.

P: Going back to your early work, one of your first main strips Captain Future in a complete story, appeared in **Heavy Metal** — it's quite exceptional for them to do that, print it all in one. It was a much more rounded style, perhaps influenced by Moebius?

S: In the beginning I was very influenced by Moebius and with him Jijé and that's all. Only those two. There are many artists I like though.

P: Which Moebius style do you like, **Arzach** or **Incal Noir**, **Incal Lumière**?

S: **Arzach**, the story was special. I prefer the story of Jodorowsky.

P: Do you prefer the style of artwork?

S: Yeh (*uncertain*)

P: **Arzach** is printed from artwork that is the same size and is very detailed. **Incal** is drawn in black line on an overlay, coloured underneath and is much larger.



S: It is coloured by Yves Chaland.

P: I have seen Yves Chaland doing a regular strip in **Spirou**.

S: Yes it is finished now.

P: Moebius' style has changed hasn't it?

S: He can do many styles. Not styles but different sorts of drawings.

P: The **Arzach** style is an influence on your initial work but what was it that made your style more angular?

S: Ever Meulen.

P: Have you met him?

S: Oh yes, he's Dutch... oh no he's from Belgium but he doesn't speak very well French, I mean he speaks more Dutch than French.

P: His work has been translated in **RAW**. He doesn't do many strips does he?

S: Most of his drawings are illustrations for advertising, not comics, not strips. He's more an illustrator.

P: What about new artists? What about Eberoni, do you like him?

S: Oh it's stylish, so it's O.K. I prefer it because he uses his own style. I don't like the story so much. I haven't the book yet. I like the drawings though. I want to see more things; you can't say something just like that. If you look at my drawings about three years ago, oh you say, it's awful, it's terrible, but now it's different, it's changed.

P: What do you want to do now?

S: Leave the country. (*Laughter*)

P: I meant what next?

S: I will do **Exterminator 17** with JPD, it's the next part to Enki Bilal's **Exterminator**.

P: Do you want to do that?

S: Yes, very much, but I have my own character, Phil Perfect. I want to draw him in a new story — so it's different.

P: That's the guy in the big trench coat who goes to the Club Macambo?

S: Oh yeh.

P: You told me you like Joost Swarte?

S: Yes, I like very much Joost. You know I like this sort of drawing so I can't like American stuff, it's impossible.

P: Swarte is now working for a children's comic in France, **Okapi**.

S: Yes, but perhaps he likes them.

P: He's got some marvellous ideas, you know his book **L'Art Moderne**?

S: It's definitely not for children.

I just do my drawing, I don't question for ▷

whom I am working, I just work. Millions of dollars I don't care about. I'm pleased when someone says to me I like your style. I must recognise that I am pleased but I'd like to say I don't care . . .

P: It's good for your ego.

S: Yeh, I used to like very much Alex Toth and Wrightson, they are great American artists, very big about ten years ago, not any more.

P: Have you seen Wrightson's *Creepshow* adaptation of the film?

S: I haven't seen it. They were better I think, it's very frightening because you must sustain it, keep going without losing quality. I try my best. It was a long time getting to this point I'm now at and there is a long way to go. There is a long time to try other things.

P: How about animation?

S: No, it doesn't interest me, it's a different thing. It takes a long time to do. I'm very alone with my work and that's it. Animation, you are not alone and I have to be.

P: Do you work in a studio with other artists?

S: Oh no I cannot. I work on my own, I cannot work with people. I'm like the cat in Tex Avery, I hate people.



While doing a sketch of his character Phil Perfect . . .

P: How do you actually work on your drawings?

S: By pencilling things small over and over many times refining the image. I then enlarge them and ink them with a brush.

P: How quickly do you work?

S: The brush is sometimes very bad and sometimes I do it very quickly because the brush is good; perhaps it's my mind, but sometimes you see the drawing and it seems very quick, but it's not. You cannot do the line. But most of the time it's slow. When you draw for a convention you always do the same drawing, sometimes you can't do anything else. That's why I don't like doing them, it's mechanical. I like to wait, to think and to try, but at a convention it has to be very rough and it's not very enjoyable.

P: Not if you don't like people?

S: Yeh (Chuckle)

P: You're putting on the spats?

S: Spats? You are insulting me? (Laughs) I just do this because I like black and white not because of the shoes. I saw these shoes in a photograph. I'd never wear them. I like to do this too.



P: The Herge influence. Have you seen an artist called Charles Burns in **RAW**?

S: I have only looked at the Joost Swarte cover on No. 2.

P: Charles Burns has appeared in issues three and four. I think you'd like the style — very smart. He's American. His artwork is so disturbing it's not unlike being hypnotised. Your characters live in a fun, light setting.

S: Not disturbing.

P: Whereas Charles Burns puts similar fifties looking characters into strange, tense psychological stories.

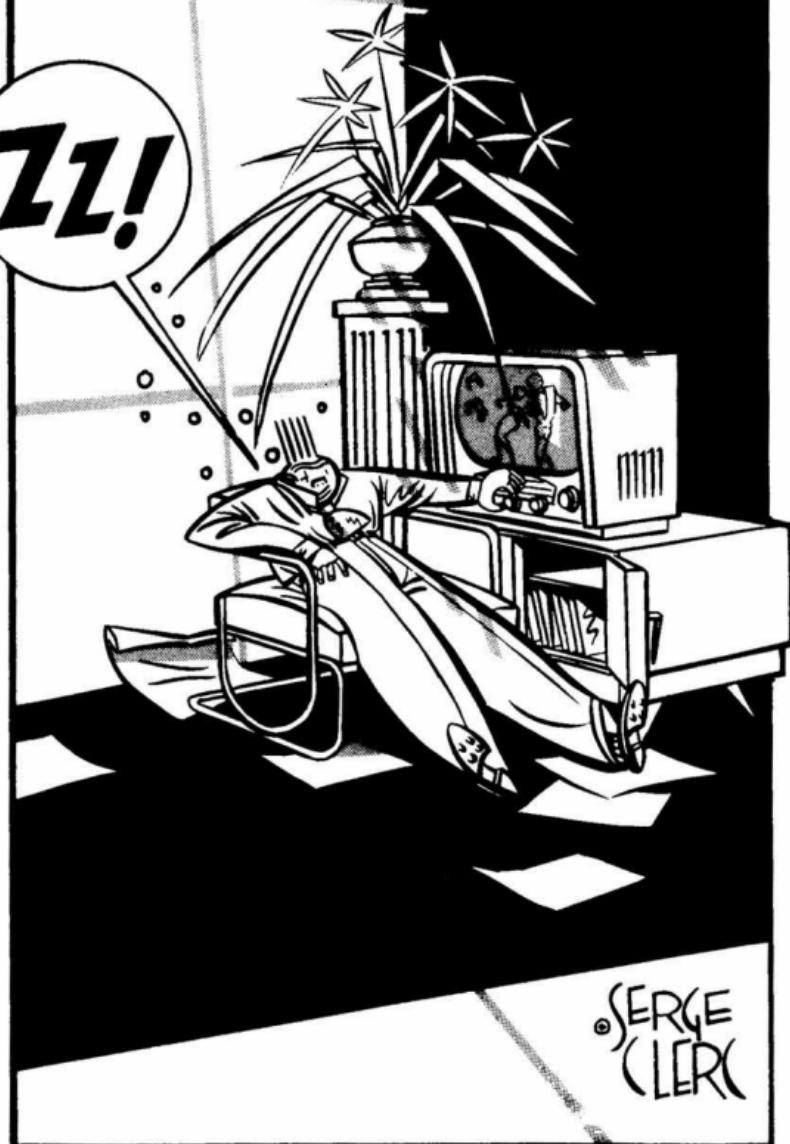
S: Interesting, it's what I'm looking for, stories.

P: There are new things coming from America, it's beginning I think.

S: I must leave for the ferry at the right time, I can't swim you know? . . . Other people talk to me about British artists and I have never heard of them.

P: Have you seen Judge Dredd? ▶

zz!



S: Yes, I don't like it. The story perhaps is good. One thing is interesting, new stories and a new way of talking. I'd like to do a story with a lot of dialogue, though I don't know if I am able to write it.

P: Do you write your own scripts?

S: Sometimes there are other people's scripts, but not at the moment. I do most of my own scripts.

P: Do you prefer that?

S: The scripts are not very good, I have some ideas. Sometimes I know I need someone to help.

P: Would you ever attempt a complete graphic novel or epic story?

S: Perhaps, I want to do small stories to plot the character, to do the drawing well and then after that I will do it. It took time to develop Phil Perfect. For me what is most important, is most interesting and most difficult to find are stories. In drawing there is not such a problem, before I said to myself how can I draw this, it's impossible, I can't draw that. I was obliged to, and after about six or seven years I can do it. The most important thing now is to choose a good story.

P: Do you put yourself into your stories?

S: I try to do this, I think it's the new way, not doing the same story of a guy chasing another guy, and punching, all that is very 'B' movies. I try to make things happen in mine, that are good jokes. Very macabre noir. I like to put stupid things in drawings like Sam Bronx. Not the science fiction character but Phil Perfect's friend.

P: You've used the same name twice?

S: Yes.

P: Could you draw him for me?

(*Serge gasps and looks at his watch*)

S: I can hear the ship it's leaving from Dover. (*Laughs then settles down to draw again*) It's good to have a character, it's your own creation, it's new for me, it's like my child. It helps the story to have a character you can come back to, to build upon. Phil Perfect has some of my character. I don't really hate people. I hate most of them. It's like Chaland, he can be terrible, more even than me. I'm a gentle person. I'm a good guy.

P: There is also a **Metal Hurlant** TV series, is that right?

S: Yes, they're doing television — something about Bandes Dessinées not just

Metal Hurlant.

(*L'Impeccable with Dionnet and Manoeuvre — now twice a month on Thursdays at 21.40 hrs on A2, for satellite TV fans.*)

P: Have you been on it?

S: No. They have artists from other magazines, not just **Metal Hurlant**.

P: And I've heard that Dionnet is planning another magazine...

S: Yes — **Casablanca**.

P: What is it like?

S: Adventure is the way he wants to do it.

P: When are you going back, tonight?

S: In just a few hours — I must go to Dover.

P: You are driving, what car do you have?

S: A terrible old Ford Escort, very old... I'm sorry (*Laughs*) Someone said to me it's the car for black people.

P: That is very racist!

S: I know but I didn't say it! You want to print this? There will be a riot! ●

SERGE CLERC

— Fanzines: (Early work) include:

PTORGUS 1 and 2 (1974)

ABSOLUTELY LIVE 1 and 2 (1975)

— Magazines:

METAL HURLANT — from No. 4 on (1975)

ROCK AND FOLK — (1977 onward) Mainly illustration.

— Books:

LE DESSINATEUR ESPION

— Humanoides Associes (1978)

CAPTAIN FUTUR — Humanoides Associes (1979)

MELANIE WHITE — Illustrations for

for J.P. Manchette, Edition Hachette

100 ANS D'EXAMENS — Illustrations Editions Vuibert (1981)

ROCKER — Humanoides Associes (1981)

SAM BRONX AND THE ROBOTS — Magic Strip (1982)

MEMOIRES DE L'ESPION — Humanoides Associes (1982)

CLERC **TRANSLATED**

HEAVY METAL No 27 June 1979 — **CAPTAIN FUTURE**. **HEAVY METAL** No 60 March 1982 — **SURPRISE PARTY**.

Clerc's work also appears in **NME** since 1978. Nick Landau has confirmed that **TITAN BOOKS** will be bringing out a British edition of Clerc's **Rocker** book at the end of this year. It will include much of the material from the French original plus some extra more topical strips.



Look at me! I'm repulsive....

...a fat freak...

...a blob!



OK Porky.. I get the point!
but stop feeling so sorry for
yourself because help is at hand.

You want to lose weight?
Well there's only one way to do it
and it's going to be tough!



eleveners

exercise!
that's what you need!
- plenty of huff and puff
- and no slacking!



you must resist the urge
to stuff your face ...
- and get some healthy
salads and fruit down
that ever open gob of yours!



willpower! that's what it takes!
- and patience... Rome wasn't built in
a day!
what you need is a new interest...
something else to think about...

stop wishing... dreaming... do it!

(I don't know why I bother...
...no one ever takes
a blind bit
of notice...)



Porky Pat ploughs on

HOKAY!



day after day

mmmm...



week after week

Really?



until...



YIPPEE!
OH WHOOP WHOOP
WHOOP!
I'VE DONE IT!

YOU LOT CAN FUCK
off for a start!



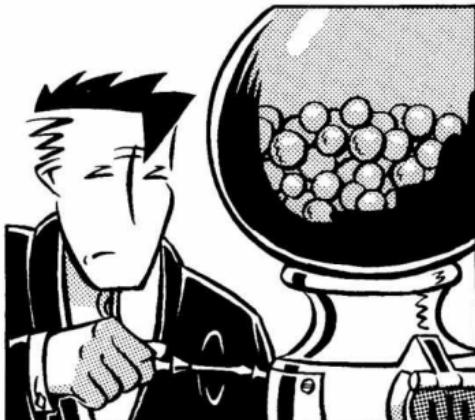
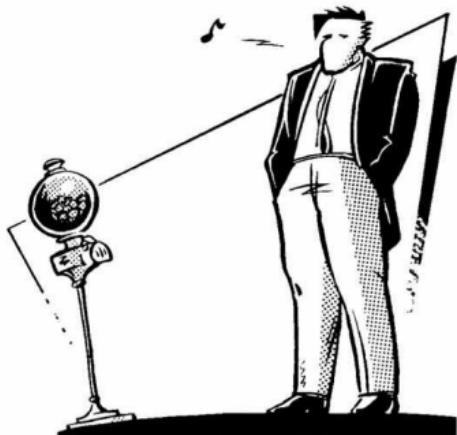
I'M GOING
TO BE
A FILM STAR —

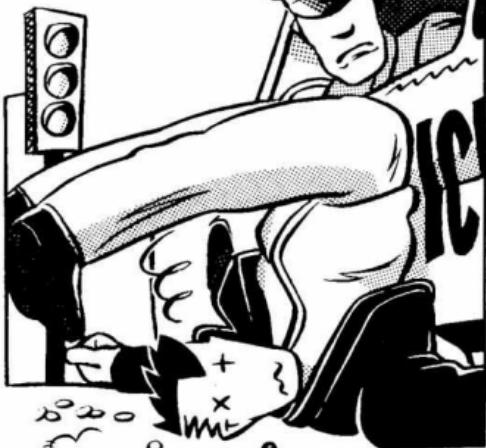
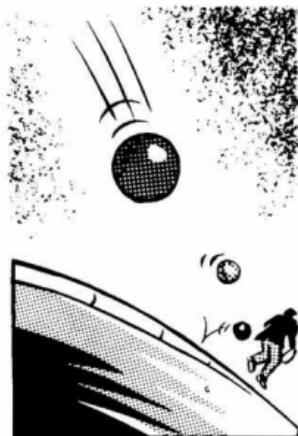
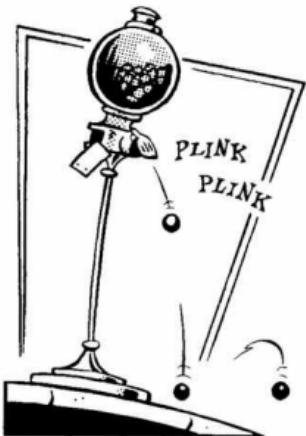
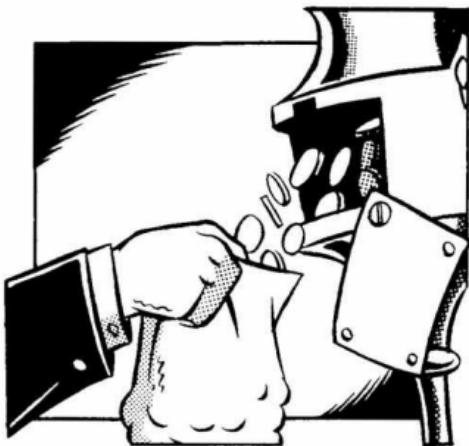


A great big FAT —
FILM STAR!



THE END





The Mystery of BAZOOKA JOE!



Chewing gum has been produced for over a hundred years, patented in America in 1871. It was never much more than a novelty, originally given away with soap. Eventually the novelty sold better than the soap and chewing gum became a product in its own right.

All gum was strictly for chewing. It was not until the 1940's, with the introduction of new softening and other synthetic products, that Bubble Gum was first sold.

From the start Bazooka Joe Bubble Gum, manufactured by Topps Inc., has been popular. This is largely due to one very important idea designed as a gimmick to sell the gum. Bazooka Joe and his Gang appeared on small folded pieces of grease-proof paper, crudely printed, wrapped around the gum, in tiny comic-strip adventures with nonsense punchlines. Tucked in the corner was your cookie-style fortune. These were not the highly collectable bubble gum cards that formed a set, but by collecting a number of comics you could send them off in exchange for a wild variety of toys and gifts.

Bazooka Joe is a little guy in a baseball cap and eyepatch, leader of the neighbourhood gang. Joe was named after one of the family who ran the Topps business; with America beginning its war effort, the Bazooka (an anti-tank gun) was a familiar if not household name; and his eyepatch derived from an advertising campaign by a leading shirt manufacturer of the time, which used an eyepatched model to catch the eye. Originally the series revolved around a dozen characters but it gradually reduced to just a few.

The artist who drew the original strips was Wesley Morse who continued into the Rock 'N' Roll fifties. From then on the same strips were recycled and translated all over

the world — into French, German, Spanish, even Hebrew. There is also a black Bazooka Joe in Nigeria, who appears in comics with their own local humour. Bazooka Joe International. One country however where you won't find Joe is Japan, not even in Tokyo, due to their restrictions on the sale of gums that stick.

Gum chewing has been the street-level cliche of Tarts and Spivs, Crooks and Kids. Like the stiletto stabbing stigma of the sixties, pocking the dance floors of society's function halls, Bubble Gum had the one social failing of being sticky. Awkward to dispose of, it was stuck to the backs of seats, under desks and unpleasantly discovered under the bar ledge. It could cover pavements, stick to your shoes, ruin carpets and became part of the Dictionary of Stains. The Japanese banned it, while we have tolerated it.

Those times are gone, with the development in the seventies of super soft gum. It's easier to bubble, it's sold in packets not penny chew pieces, and what is most important, it does not stick. Bazooka gum has become Super Bazooka, a packet of no-stick soft gum, but Bazooka Joe and his Gang have been left behind.

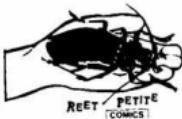
Even in his own ordinary pack Joe now introduces non-Bazooka comics such as: 'Unreal People', 'Little Monsters', 'Dumb Jokes' and 'Rotten Riddles'. Art Spiegelman, now the publisher of RAW, introduced these about two years ago, in his capacity as Topp's creative consultant. They were drawn by his colleagues from the underground press, Jay Lynch, Howard Cruse, Sam Whitehead and others.

Forty years of tuck shop treats and kids growing up has left Bazooka Joe unique and unacknowledged. The real mystery is why no-one has noticed him before. ●

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Escape

PUBLISHED IN
ESCAPE MAGAZINE SPRING 83

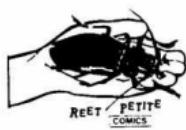


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Escape

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SK

JOHNNY TOMORROW

ROCKETED TO EARTH
AS A CHILD -



THE RAYS OF THE YELLOW
SUN, MUTATED MY RIGHT
HAND TO OVER 50 TIMES
ITS NORMAL SIZE!

WHICH WHEN YOU COME TO
THINK ABOUT IT, ISN'T
A LOT OF USE!



SILENT DOG
WHISTLE!

1/2 Mile Range. Dogs
respond as if by
magic. Collect only
5 comics.



FORTUNE: NO NECK? NO CHANCE!

SK BD

MR POTATO HEAD

THIS IS MY
STORY - I AM
ALONE!



A FREAK! LET
YOUR CHILDREN
FEAR ME!



MY STALK-LIKE
EYES! STUPID
STUCK-ON SMILE!



POTATO - HEAD!



I HATE MYSELF!



HYPNOTIC COIN

Hypnotize Fast.
Fascinating pocket-
size invention.
Collect only 3
comics.



FORTUNE: BETTER DEAD THAN PORKY!

SHAKY
KANE

UK
BD

LIL ELVIS

and his
PALS®

AIN'T NOTHIN'
BUT A HOT-DOG
SELLER!



HEY! LIL ELVIS
THIS HOT-DOG
SURE TASTES
FUNNY!

Shaky
Kane

THEN WHY
DONTCHA LAUGH?



ROCK 'N' ROLL
SIDEBURNS!
The look you
want.
COLLECT ONLY
5 COMICS



FORTUNE: DON'T BE HIP. LIKE EVERYTHING!

UK BD MAN WITH X-RAY EYES!

SHAKY
KANE
HI! I'M THE MAN WITH
X-RAY
VISION!



I GET TO SEE THE
BONES IN MY HAND!



OR EVEN
THE LEAD
IN A
PENCIL!

BUT IT SURE TAKES THE
MYSTERY OUT OF MY
MARRIAGE!



JOKE GUM
Chew it and lips
swell up! Collect
only 3 comics.

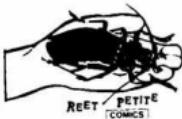


FORTUNE: DON'T DO IT KID!

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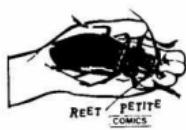


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EPISODE SIX: LACKTEEN ANSWERS THE PHONE:



INTERLUDE

ONE PAGE STRIP!

MEANWHILE HOXIE, ISOLATED FROM THE MONKS, FUMES OVER HIS FATE:

CONDEMNED TO PLAY BIT-PARTS IN MEANINGLESS COMIC STRIPS.

BAD VUGGAM!



OUR EXCITING ADVENTURE CONTINUES! LACKTEEN, HURRYING TO DELIVER THE IMPORTANT MESSAGE IN HIS CARE IS INTERCEPTED BY A MASKED INTRUDER—



WHILE HOXIE DISILLUSIONED, HAS LEFT THE PROFESSION.

THOSE MOROSE MONKS!

BUT... I LOVE YOU!!

...OF COURSE NO STRIP IS COMPLETE WITHOUT A STORY OF UNREQUITED LOVE.



NEXT EPISODE: ANOTHER OF LACKTEEN'S HATS!



Bob Johnson looks back in soft focus to the heyday of the boy's weekly and the greatest human athlete the world has ever seen.

*Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint and heard great argument
About it and about, but evermore
Came out by the same door as in I went.*

Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

Well it may have been that way for old Omar the Tentmaker but when I was young, who wasted time with doctors and saints? Not I to be sure. Why should I need them when I had Strang the Terrible, The Wolf of Kabul, Morgyn the Mighty, Dynamite Dan, Thick-Ear Donovan, Falcon Swift and Charlie O'Neill the Six-Gun Gorilla?

Marvellous heroes all and to be found in the pages of five adventure weeklies that had been born in the depression-hit North East of Scotland. **Adventure**, **Hotspur**, **Rover**, **Skipper** and **Wizard** their names and they had erupted on the publishing scene out of the house of D.C. Thomson, Dundee, from 1921 through the early thirties. With their arrival the relatively cosy worlds of Greyfriars and St Jim's in the **Magnet** and **Gem** were severely shaken.

Aimed exclusively at schoolboys their robust down-to-earth prose and almost total lack of story exposition was a radical departure from the boy's weeklies that had gone before. Their writers would simply present a relatively outrageous series of situations, and leave the reader to accept them, which of course he always did.

There had been rustic heroes before Wilson. Young strapping bucolic types in the

tradition of John Ridd in 'Lorna Doone'. Wilson was a rustic, but when he arrived, early in World War II there were certain differences. To begin with he was not the usual short-on-brains, muscle-bound hero. He was tall and thin and from the early description looked quite cadaverous. He appeared in the pages of the **Wizard** bursting into the world of athletics by vaulting a fence at an international meet in London and joining a mile race as it got under way. Certainly I and the other readers, had never seen anyone quite like Wilson. Clad only in hand-knitted woolly Long Johns he annihilated the opposition and ran a three minute mile. This was long before the four minute barrier had been broken. As he crossed the finishing line he collapsed and appeared to have died, now he really looked like a cadaver. After a few minutes he revived and, no explanations, ran off, back to the Pennine fastness from whence he had come. The effect upon me and the other readers, not to mention the three A's was electric, the next installment couldn't come fast enough.

In the following weeks driblets of information about this wonderman were leaked very sparingly. Thomson's knew they were on to a winner and were playing it for all it was worth. Wilson was tracked down by an intrepid reporter to a cave on the Yorkshire moors where he lived on nuts and berries and secret herbal formulas. He had, it seemed, only left his wilderness and run the mile race to test himself. He was diffident, self-effacing, a

loner to end all loners. He appeared to need little and lived a life more spartan and monk-like than any Spartan or Monk. We loved him. Week after week he would be reluctantly persuaded by the reporter to leave the grimpen mire he called home and compete in athletic events all over the country. He shattered records in all of them, from one hundred yard sprints to marathons, high jumps, long jumps, pole vaults, in short you name it he smashed it. After every event he would collapse in a kind of catatonic trance. There was always the genuine fear that 'this time' his mighty heart had finally exploded in his skeleton-like frame. This apparent vulnerability kept us all in a state of suspense and was the essential difference between Wilson and the totally preposterous super-heroes in U.S. comics. His seeming vulnerability was his strength. Wilson was only partially preposterous, he had a toehold in the real world. What he was doing one felt was almost possible. Most of the time the Thomson writers obeyed the laws of nature in their stories, but little else of course.

Wilson was a winner. He made **Wizard** the highest circulation boy's weekly of its day. During the period when I was reading it (aged nine to thirteen) he made a number of comebacks by popular request. After the first series the stories became marginally more outrageous.

It was no longer enough that he shattered world records week after week — he had more to do. Like the time the British Olympic team was captured by a band of savage Bedouins in the desert and Wilson had to outrun and outjump their sheik's Arabian stallion over a pit, some forty feet long and full of burning coals or he and the whole team would lose their lives.

During this period the writers began to leak, week by week, some facts about Wilson's past. These were in tantalisingly small doses and of course the enigma remained, for certain facts were never revealed. We never learned about his parents. How could we when the female sex did not exist in Thomson land? It was revealed however that he was considerably older than we realised. How old? Well, of course that was never disclosed but in one mind-boggling episode the story was told of how Wilson, after running for God only knows how many

miles through enemy territory, brought the news of Napoleon's impending attack at Waterloo to a grateful Wellington. Who knows, if the series had continued Wilson may have turned out to be the original Marathon runner. Sadly we were never to know.

World War II was now very much with us and despite his Garbo-like desires to be alone Wilson had to be called to the colours. He joined the R.A.F. and performed more staggering feats of endurance when dropped behind enemy lines. Along the way he also became a brilliant fighter pilot keeping the skies of his beloved England free from the dreadful Hun. Despite these feats he still appeared in the reading so much more human than any of his comic contemporaries and I always felt that his nemesis could not be far away. Like Sherlock Holmes he would come to his Reichenbach Falls. It was still a terrible shock when it occurred. I knew as soon as I read the first couple of paragraphs of that final episode that something dreadful was about to happen, for I learned that Wilson after much soul searching had decided to hand over to the government the secret herbal and psychic formulas that made him a one-man Olympic team. All was to be revealed on his return from a dangerous mission over enemy occupied France. Of course, he never came back.

I was crushed. All my friends were crushed. How could our lives ever be the same without Wilson? Never knowing what happened to him. The myths and legends would grow around him like they grew around Glen Miller a few years later. It was terrible, but then we got to thinking. Did we really want everyone to be as sensational as Wilson? No excitement in that at all but that's the way it would have been if Wilson had lived to tell all. Better by far that he disappeared taking his secrets with him and anyway there was always the chance that he was not dead but wandering around France disguised as a French onion boy, you could never tell with Wilson.

For those of us who were that certain age at that certain time earlier this century and came within his orbit he would remain the supreme loner of all time and we were glad he was ours. I remember the shock in 1944 when the film '*Wilson*' came to our cinemas. For a few days I was quite downcast at the thought that the D

Americans had taken him up. For Godsake how had they come to find out about him? But then the film turned out to be about President Wilson and I could rest easy once more for who had heard of him? What had he done that could possibly compare with our Wilson of the Wizard? •

D.C. Thomson have missed Wilsor too, it seems. There new boys' weekly, **SPIKE**, stars 'The Man in Black' in its centre pages. He's remarkably similar to Wilson — perhaps a close cousin? •

POPULAR GRAPHICS

This is a listing of strip and cartoon exhibitions, events, courses and competitions. Please send information to the Editors no later than April 11th 1983.

● **GRAPHIC RAP** — If you're quick, you can catch this travelling show of urban art-strips from Spiegelman's RAW team plus Hunt Emerson and BIFF from Britain. It closes March 5th at the Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool. Last chance will be at the Midland Group Arts Centre, Nottingham from April 2nd to May 2nd 1983.

● **An exhibition** of work by Mark Fairnington (seen in NME), Jenny Linn, Phil Little, Mollusc and others is on from March 15th to April 2nd at the North Shields Library, Tyne & Wear.

● **LONDON** March 26th and June 4th — Comic Marts at Central Hall, Westminster with many professionals attending. Doors open mid-day, admission free. Main attraction — the Fast Fiction table!

● **BOLOGNA** — March 3rd to 6th — Italy's children's and illustrated Book Fair. **NEW YORK** — April 22nd to 24th — Top French BD creators meet their American colleagues at the Sheraton Hotel.

BARCELONA — May 12th to 15th — Spain's biggest gathering of professionals and fans with international guests. •

FAST FICTION FACTS

This is a selection from the wide range of small press magazines. If you produce your own, send a copy to the Editors to be included in this section, space permitting.

FAST FICTION — began in October 1980 as a table at the bi-monthly Westminster Comic Marts, providing an outlet for all self-published magazines and a meeting place for small press artists, writers and editors from all over the country. Hence the title for this column.

The **ALTERNATIVE HEADMASTER'S BULLETIN** — 4, a wide variety of experimental strips, from David Noon's 'Gonk Boy' to Mathew Ronalds' 'Rape.' And cover artist Mark Farmer adapts a Ted Hughes' poem. 70 pence by post from Gerald Midgley, 25 Barnmead Road, Beckenham, Kent.

BLUES — Eddie Campbell's latest contains within its 28 blue-and-white pages the new lead story and probably his best 'Rock 'N' Roll' strip, 'It's Me Little Family Innit?' with some work by Ed Hillyer. It's available for 70 pence from Ed Hillyer, 13 Freshfield Drive, Trent Gardens, Southgate, London N14.

DOG — A 'hard, sexy, violent and lonely' RAW-format magazine, is the collective effort of Andy Johnson, Adrian Bland and Ollie Howard. The second should be out late spring with new writing by Soft Cell manager, Stevo, Australian band Foetus on your Breath and others. The DOG Boys are working on an animated film to be shown during gigs by The The soon. DOG No. 1 may still be had if you're lucky for £1.50 plus postage from 15 County Grove, Camberwell, London SE5.

FANTASY EXPRESS — 5, sadly the final issue, interviews Alan Moore, looks back at **Countdown** weekly and pays tribute to Desperate Dan artist,

Dudley Watkins. Lew Stringer's Magazine of British Comics costs 50 pence plus postage from 11 Middlemarch Road, Hill Top, Nuneaton.

FAST FICTION — has also given its name to an A5 stripzine. In the latest, No 4, are another of Phil Elliott's 'Tales from Gimbley', Ian Wieczorek's 'Cracks' and 'Booboo's Tent' by Eddie Campbell. Copies of Nos. 2 and 3 are still available. Price 55 pence including postage from I.R. Wieczorek, 141 Brecknock Road, Tufnell Park, London N9.

MIRACULOUS CIRCUMSTANCES — is a serial strip magazine with work by Geoff Chambers, Jim Fortey,



Martin McCrory and Bob Moulder. Two issues out so far, a third due shortly, with an early episode of Eddie Campbell's 'Alec' series. Order from Luddite Enterprises, 4 Agamemnon Road, London NW6 — 65 pence plus postage per copy.

MYRA MAGAZINES — Nos 1 and 2 by Myra Hancock star her characters Miss March, Sharon and Maureen and the Guardian Angels. Her latest, **IS THIS ROMANCE?** introduces Potato Head and reveals the truth behind the Herpes Horror. The three of them cost 50 pence each plus postage from 7 Vale Grove, London N4. •

Booboo's Kecks

Campbell BLACKPOOL - OCT-82

JUST WAIT TILL JIM
SEES THESE KECKS.

YOU DON'T NEED
THEM TURNED UP.

OF COURSE I DO



HAIL! MEN-O-WARS
MEN~~~

SAFEGUARDS OF
YOUR NA-TION.

HERE IS AN END
AT LAST~

OF ALL PRI-VA-TION

YOU'VE GOT YOUR PAY

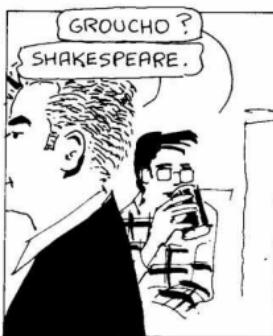
SPARE ALL YOU
CAN AFFORD~

~

~

~







apologies to Gilbert and Sullivan.

IVE TREACLE 
AND TOFFEE 



I'VE TEA AND I'
I'VE COFFEE



SOFT TOMMY AND
SUCCULENT CHOPS -



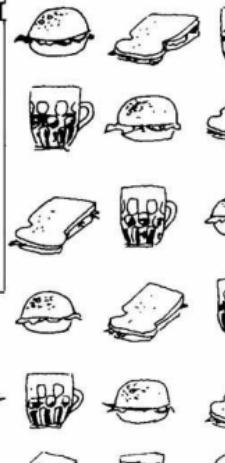
I'VE CHICKENS AND CONIES -



AND PRETTY
POLONIES



AND EXCELLENT
PEPPERMINT DROPS



WHO'S GETTING
THE SNAPPAGE
IN THEN?

CHEFFIES?

LOTS OF TOMATO



THEN BUY OF YOUR
BUTTERCUP -



SAILORS SHOULD
NEVER BE SHY



END

BIFF BANTER

Interview by Paul Gravett 4th November 1982.

An early morning visit to misty Islington to meet Chris Garrett and Mick Kidd for a decaffeinated breakfast and a bit of banter.

Chris and Mick have been friends since grammar school. Since then they have worked together on numerous projects, including pantomimes, films and magazines, leading to today's Biff Bonanza — a popular street-level range of badges, cards, T-shirts, posters, mugs and now **The Essential Biff** book. In the future, Biff premieres on a Channel 4 Saturday night Arts programme in April called 'Alter Image'.

P: How did you start off?

Chris: You find out you're supposedly good at drawing at school. I used to draw strip cartoons, which I pretended were films. I remember drawing the curtain going up in the first frame. I used to spend a lot of time on the titles but the story got a bit boring 'cos it was too much trouble!

P: So films were an influence — did you read comics?

C: I liked mainly **Dandy**, **Beano** and **Eagle**. All those soft intellectual things. Then the **Buck Jones** and **Kit Carson** western series. On the back there always used to be these terrific mail-order ads for all these jokes which I used to think were great.

Mick: Pocket Jukeboxes and Blouse Grab-Bags!

P: Any school magazines or newspapers

C: Yeah, it went about three issues, called **Gad!** (*Laughter*) 'The Goon Show', I would say that's one of the main influences really.

M: 'The Goon Show's started off somewhere and got off on a completely different tangent and it didn't seem to matter, it was the only show around with a logic of its own. It used to have a story each week.

C: When we were 14 or 15, we had this idea of making films. We spent ages doing the script which was intuitively drawn from that sort of format. Main characters in it, then one or two bit players who were nothing to do with the story but kept appearing.

M: Like ballroom dancers, dancing out of a railway tunnel! There was one called 'I'm Alright Old John'.

C: It was called that because of 'I'm Alright Jack', the Peter Sellers film — it was nothing to do with that story. The other was called 'Hercules Unveiled' — a reference to a film with Steve Reeves in it, 'Hercules Unchained'. But this was about a special Hercules bike, you could travel through time on.

P: Did you get any encouragement for your comics at Art College? What was their attitude to it?

C: That always worried me. Still does. You see people churning away, worrying about pieces of stuff leaning against a wall, and it means nothing. They're just concerned with formal abstractions — I was for ages. What the Hell has that got to do with anything?!

M: A massive influence on me was Tony Hancock. That guy was brilliant. Monty Python too!

P: How did the **Scilly Globe begin?**

M: The first idea came when Chris was in a band.

C: 'The Red Sails in the Sunset Syncopators'. I played saxophone and piano sometimes. I was terrible! (*Laughter*)

M: I didn't play any music, so I did the **Scilly Globe** as if I were an **NME** reporter. The original was interviews with the band.

C: You talked about them as if they were professional musicians, record labels to worry about — big stars.

M: By number two it became like **Private Eye** taking up social issues — dog shit on the promenade, blackberries being

denuded on council paths, Harold Wilson. Around 200 people got involved. We sold it at the pub Friday nights.

P: How did **Interplanetary News** begin?

C: I had finished college in 1968. My main activity was trying to become a painter and worrying about great Modernist debates in painting. I never had a family background of study, so, having to take on stuff you're supposed to know about, you have a certain distance from it. You then find it has provided you with useful things to drop out in the wrong context. All this nascent **BIFF** work was somewhere to relax with the heavy stuff.

M: I had just got to London in 1972. I had the idea of a synthesis of the Underground Press and Comics of the late '60s (all very American — preoccupied with drugs, sex and the Cosmic) as a very English thing. I was bringing in English contemporary ideas, but within a different context of science fiction or football, like old Romance comics — English not American — **Boyfriend, Romeo, Marty, Mirabelle** and **Valentine**.

They took place in offices with good-looking blokes, and girls who'd go home, lie on the bed and have thought-bubbles about this beautiful hunky man in his car. All Mecca ballrooms and parties.

C: Those comics were meant to appeal to teenage girls. It was cheaply produced — free Frankie Vaughan transfers to put on your shoes. Often the stories would be given song titles, but not be based on the song.

M: Pop and rock were massive for us, our generation were the first teenagers, a huge industry pumping out — most of it utterly banal. In the context of **Interplanetary News** I wanted to use that banality to effect.

Mundane silly stuff alongside big psychological theories. All frame-by-frame strips but not very tidy — plastered and stuck down — typeset, hand-written and from mail-order catalogues. Titles were made up at random. They were a really strong part of what we're doing. I gave the first issue to friends. The second one was done properly, and it got reviewed in **Time Out**. It became the forerunner of **BIFF**. In 1976 I sent a copy to **International Times**, who sent a telegram back immediately saying 'Get in touch'. So I rang them and we started getting spreads in **IT**.

P: That led to **BIFF** — didn't the badges come first?

M: Yes, I did cut-outs originally from old **International Times** — about 50 or 60 of them. The goalie was one of the first. The cards came about six months later, 3-framers. I left the Film Co-Op where I was working — by that time there were T-shirts, the cards were more popular, good press coverage. **BIFF** Quarterly had come out too, printed by Better Badges, who added the colour. They were fantastic. 3,000 now sold out. We did 2,000 of **BIFF** Quarterly 2. I'd like to do more.

C: Another colour one, perhaps having a go ourselves on the colour.

M: By a series of lucky breaks, I got a permanent stall at Camden Lock Market. To begin with I didn't get hardly any money, but now, because of the T-shirts mainly, they give us a reasonable income.

P: You've now got **BIFF** mugs for sale — what's coming?

M: The next thing will be **BIFF** tea towels!

P: Where did the name **BIFF** come from?

C: From Biffo the Bear. We used to go to dances in the Scilly Isles. Mick invented the Biffo dance — he looked like Biffo (Laughter).

M: I had a black beard, jeans and polo neck and a tubby gut!!

P: How are the cards and strips put together?

C: Simply, I do the drawing and paste-up from Mick's rough mix. They start with a set of characters with no particular background. There might be a note that says '**bookshelf**' like a sketch for a set. Some I originated, like 'Video Vera', but mainly it's Mick's ideas. But they're never 100% one or the other.

C: Often he clips something out of an old comic, like an Alan Class reprint, and glues it on with indications of the scenery or leaving that entirely up to me. The business of putting in the backgrounds, scenery, clothes, hair-styles, is the same as putting things out of context. The background is as important as anything else. Then the details start to work in — lots of clutter — bookshelves are great fun — a lot of crazy titles. If we see a line that we think we might use, we jot it down.

M: I've probably got a jumble of possibilities ▷

AND NOW... IN GLORIOUS **NOSTALGIASCOPE**

THAT SOUNDS
DELIGHTFUL—
I'LL TELL MILT
WE'RE GOING.

REMEMBER YOU

THIS LOVELY
SONG-TITLE INSPIRES
THIS POIGNANT PICTURE-
STORY, SET IN THE PARALLEL
UNIVERSE OF **TODAY** AND **YESTERDAY!**

ROLF, YOU WERE SO SELF-ASSURED,
THOUGH I DIDN'T GO A BUNDLE ON YOUR
LATER WORK...

BRILLIANT, ISN'T IT?

—THE MARRIAGE OF SCIENCE AND
DESIRE, A TRIBAL PHYSICS OF
CONTRASTING HUES.

WHAT A
LOAD OF
COBBLERS.

WHY,
IT'S—ER—
FAB!

NOTHING YET...
THOUGHT
PROCESSES... UN
...UNCHANGED.

STRUGGLING
ARTIST
LOOK

POOR STAN: YOU WERE ON AN INTROSPECTIVE
DOWNER — I FELT LIKE A MOTHER-FIGURE...

IT'S JUST A PHASE YOU'RE
GOING THROUGH... NOW CALM DOWN
AND DRINK YOUR BARLEYCUR

WHY ARE
MEN SO
EGOCENTRIC?

Buddy

I'LL ALWAYS SEE THINGS THE
WAY A MIRROR SEEKS THEM...
REVERSED! AND THAT MEANS THAT
THE REST OF THE WORLD ISN'T REAL
ANYMORE TO ME... IT'S JUST A
REFLECTION! I'M IN ANOTHER
DIMENSION... ALL BY MYSELF...
...FOR EVER!

GOOD OLD SID: ALWAYS A CHEERY
WORD WHEN I FELT A BIT BELOW PAR...

EVEN IF WE GOT
HITCHED IN AN AMUSEMENT
ARCADE AND LIVED ON THE
PREMISES, I GUESS I'D
STILL LOVE YOU.

WHY THANKS,
SID — THAT'S
QUITE A
COMPLIMENT!

THE RELENTLESS
RIBBONS OF
REALITY!

AND LANCE — FOREVER THE
FIGURE OF AUTHORITY...

I'M NOT A HERO,
I'M JUST DOING
MY JOB—REACH,
STRANGER!

DUKE—DUKE—
DUKE OF EARL...

YUL BRYNNER
WALK

NEXT RON THE Maoist AND GRAHAM
THE TAOIST → MY DATE WITH
DESTINY!

and after 5 hours the whole frame of a card will take shape. But it may take three days — ridiculous, all I'm doing is devising bits and pieces, I don't know how it will look. But we've got such a good system now, I can scratch down anything and Chris will know it. I know intuitively certain things won't fit, even though they're fantastic statements, the public won't relate to them as funny.

P: Is there a danger of running out of new ideas?

M: I don't think we've got to that yet! How many cards where it's just two people talking to each other can you keep doing? A lot of the earlier stuff could be re-worked with a more cutting edge. Our work definitely starts from the broken narrative.

C: I recognise the tackiness, smudgy printing, cheapness are part of them — I work same size on the cards. But when you spend time doing in one picture what amounts to a discontinuous strip, it's got to be printed carefully. The strip is one way of doing it, the other is to make a bigger fuller image, with sequences in the same space. If we take the idea to video or things we do ourselves, it's another way of making every element say something.

P: Will the cards translate well onto TV?

C: I couldn't see how to convert black and white two-dimensional images into colour 3D. How you understand TV is so different. You can look around the card, but with a film you have to see things in order. If you did the cards straight — bubble A then bubble B — baBOOM! — you'd be expected to take it as

a punchline. I wondered how the actors will say it, what intonation they'd use, what they look like as they're saying it. We tried to find people who had faces which fitted the fifties stereotype. The solution will be translating the script from the cards more into cinematic or TV clichés, rather than trying to reproduce a comic on telly, like *Jane*. Accept it's a film — you could set it up with a couple in a clinch, like in 'Gone with the Wind' or a Bergman Movie.

P: Are your cards political?

C: They do function politically, but in a very generalised sense. They're having a go at this WASP-based ideology, attacking conventions and the way things are represented.

P: What do you enjoy?

C: I love British movies — Ealing comedies and the 50's and 60's. Stars like John Mills, Kenneth Moore and all the B-movie actors. I read Roland Barth, Raymond Williams. I like to buy old **FILM FUN** Annuals.

M: I've liked Philip K Dick for about 5 years now. I've just finished 'One Hundred Years of Solitude'. I don't like big blockbuster movies. I'm not interested in horror or tension, violent films playing on the human psyche. I love Woody Allen and Ken Campbell. I think some of **Sour Cream** is brilliant — Fanny Tribble's **Heavy Periods** is like down-market Bretecher. I like Glen Baxter, Ray Lowry and Posy Simmonds.

C: The power of a piece of work is when people say 'I know someone like that'. I think John Glashen of the **Observer** is a genius.

P: What's the future of comics in the UK?

M: It will always be a minority thing, but quite sizeable. It's a bit swamped by the Marvel comics industry — that's the dominant influence. I'm just not into it.

C: Yes, what I don't like about comics is the stridency of a lot of the composition and drawing — things zooming 3-dimensionally out of the frame. Whereas I really like very gentle imagery, like Rupert Bear, you can see the landscape, the foreground, it's there, it floats along, like in the old British movies — no 'film noir' devices — nothing is shouted. ●



The Essential Biff is published by Pavement Press, price £2.95.

Another **Biff** Book is due October 83.

The Bard Mortified?



William Shakespeare's plays have been mutated into almost every medium — from Hollywood musicals — 'Kiss Me Kate', from 'Taming of the Shrew', to Sci Fi movies 'Forbidden Planet' from 'The Tempest', the best known adaptations into comics have been the American **Classics Illustrated** series published by Gilberton from 1941 until 1971. Watered-down condensations, they never proposed to replace the full text, respectfully suggesting, '...Don't miss the added enjoyment of reading the original..'. After 1954, they were subject, like all American comics, to censorship by the Comics Code Authority. Not a drop of blood is spilt nor a blow struck in the sanitized version of 'Macbeth', naively illustrated by A. Blum.

A lesser known attempt to bring Shakespeare to the masses was **Wright's Shakespeare Library**, which began, and ended, with 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' in 1936. Published in a large pulp magazine format with the '*complete text, modernized spelling and 25 exquisite illustrations by Virgil Finlay — all for 35 cents*', it was a dire financial failure.

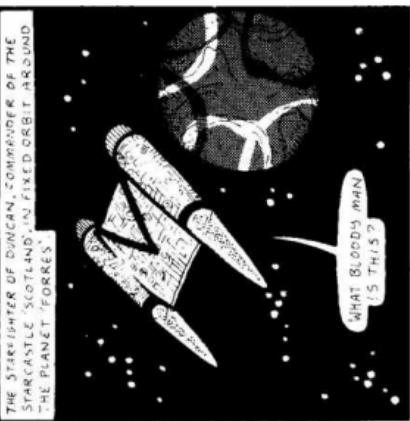
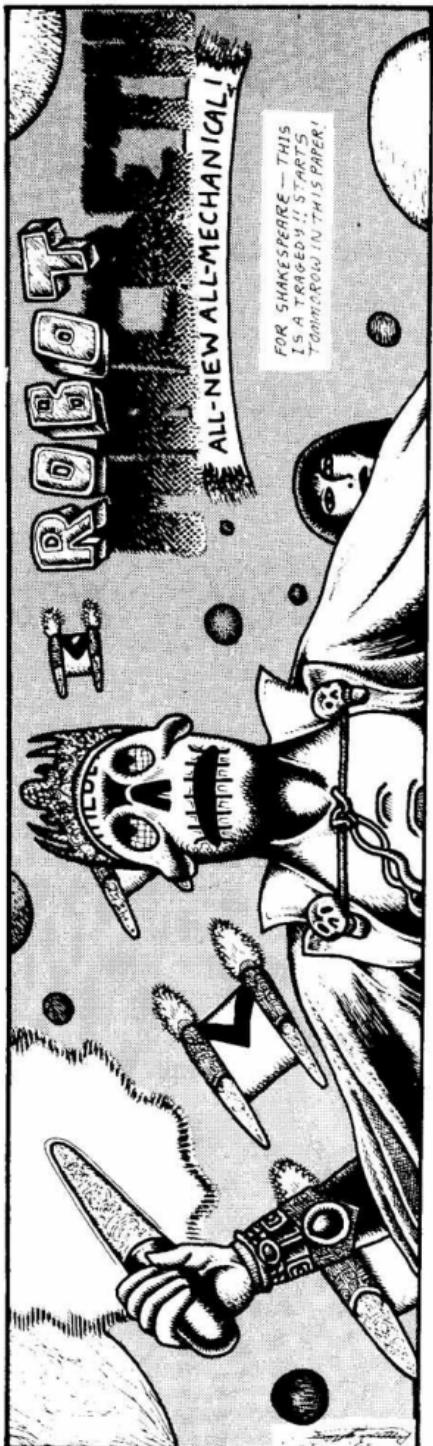
The latest version cartoon **Macbeth** produced by Oval Projects in October 1982, is the first attempt to express the unabridged play in visual form. Neither of the French versions, one in black and white by Marcele, the other in colour by Di Luca, have tried this. It is hardly surprising then that the new book has been open to criticism. '*The words are the most graphic presence ... The drawings are hopelessly inadequate beside them, but that would have been inevitable even if they had been the product of talent*' Clive James (*Observer* 12 Sept 1982)

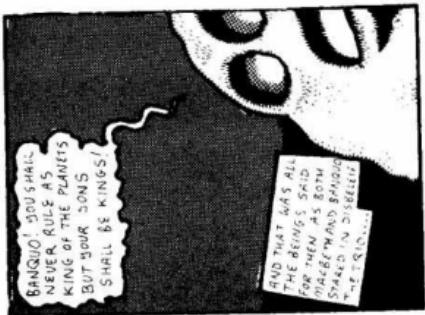
'The fact that much of what occurs is described in dialogue, as befits a stage play, is no excuse for a graphic version that is for the most part a series of unrelated head-shots of hard-to-tell-apart characters, hemmed in on all sides by enormous and generally alarming looking word balloons'. Jo Duffy (Associate Editor, *Epic Magazine*, Feb 1983)

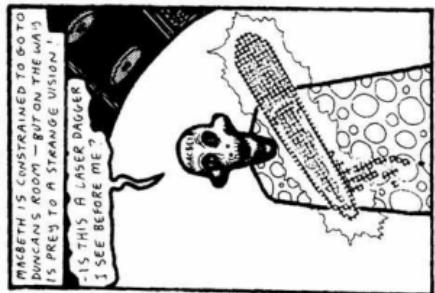
For all this, Anne Taute, Editor of cartoon **Macbeth**, considers that artist Von's '*very lurid*' style does suit what is a lurid play. '*They're crude, but full of vigour*'. The original concept was his and waited three years to appear. Anne Taute explains that the artist should interpret and not merely illustrate the words. '*You can set it in space, under the sea, anywhere you like. I love it if you take it off the stage and put it into the Fellini's and Bertolucci's, rather than Jonathan Miller and all the floorboards. To me Shakespeare is boring on the boards, but marvellous in film. So getting Shakespeare from film into the equivalent if film on paper is the ultimate in understanding him. It comes to life that way*'.

Surprisingly Anne Taute has had little experience in producing strips, but, whatever **Macbeth**'s failings, her forthcoming books hold much promise. She is now expanding her awareness of the story-strip, considering widely varied artwork from all over the world. Out this autumn, **Othello** represents eighteen months' work by another South American artist, Oscar Zarate. And the next in the series, **King Lear**, out in Spring 1984, is by British artist, Ian Pollock. Meanwhile Von has completed his second play **Romeo and Juliet**, with Brian Cleaver, David Hine and Peter Sloper, to be released in October 83 and followed by **Hamlet**, with a different publisher.

So far Oval Projects' presentation of **Macbeth** has not helped to promote the validity and potential of classics in comics, but the strongest point is Shakespeare himself. He was a man of the people, writing for live entertainment. He would have welcomed the fact that the complete text of his plays is now reaching a new audience. It proves yet again that the Bard is indeed immortal.●







BOOK REVUE



▲ LYNDA BARRY —

Girls and Boys

An interesting find, this very American collection of scratchy naive drawings is full of primitive energy and urban paranoia. She has a good sense of humour and dialogue. No trace of where they originally appeared. Available via Airlift Distributors from Words and Music, Charing Cross Road, London.

The Real Comet Press, Seattle. £3.95. 100 pages. Perfect Bound Softback.



▲ BRYAN TALBOT — The Adventures of Luther Arkwright — Book One.

Finally complete after over ten years' work, this book reprints the epic serial from **pssst!** magazines Nos 2-10. A finely rendered and original piece of fantasy storytelling, with an introduction by Michael Moorcock. Excellent value.

Never Editions. £2.95. 100 pages. Perfect Bound Softback.

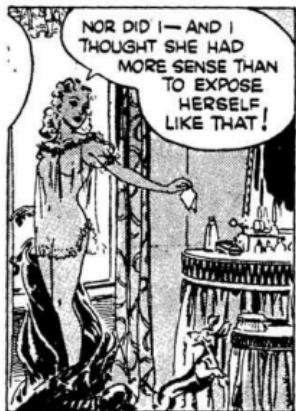


▲ POSY SIMMONDS —

Pick of Posy

A selection of her best **Silent Three** strips from the **Guardian**, revealing her very English wit and her fine powers of observation of life in middle-class London. Careful drawing and beautiful lettering.

Jonathan Cape. £5.50. 100 pages. Hardback.



▲ JANE — introduced by Leslie Thomas.

'Never was the term 'Cartoon Strip' more apt.' Our adventurous heroine, 'The Forces' Sweetheart', constantly loses her clothes in this tie-in with the BBC TV serial. This was loosely based on 'Hush Hush House' (1940) reprinted from the **Daily Mirror** and drawn by Norman Pett. The second story, 'Nature in the Raw', from 1951, is drawn by Mike Hubbard, not reprinted in the mammoth **Jane At War** paperback (1976). Both stories were written by Don Freeman.

Pelham Books. £2.95. 100 pages. Perfect Bound Softback.

1972 a return to the hyperfeminine woman, waist in the right place, lipstick a no-nonsense red hair wavy, gathers and flounces, pastel shades...



▲ CLAIRE BRETECHER —

What a Life...

Another collection presented by French publisher, Dargaud, in a similar format to Methuen's best-selling **Frustration**, and dating from the early '70s. She casts her cynical gaze over the absurdities of the human condition and particularly women under the pressures of female liberation.

Frederick Muller Ltd. £3.95. 72 pages, 13 in colour. Perfect bound Softback.

ANGUS MCKIE's vibrant colour strips, as seen in **Heavy Metal**, appear in **Comic Tales**, a 48 page book with a new 16 pager, 'Wurtham's Law'.

BOB MOULDER and **MARTIN McCRRY** are the creators of the next in the Writers and Readers Series, **The French Revolution for Beginners**.

JULES FEIFER's biting newspaper strips are collected in a new anthology from Penguin Books, price £6.95.

COMING SOON

GLEN BAXTER is working on a new autobiographical narrative book **My Life**, due this autumn from Thames and Hudson.

Titan Books has announced a series of 96 page strip reprint books, featuring **JIM HOLDWAY**'s **Modesty Blaise**, **SYDNEY JORDAN**'s **Jeff Hawke** and **FRANK BELLAMY**'s **Garth**. ●

georgette

Sorry, I've been away for a week - I should have got in touch... France... Yeah... Listen!



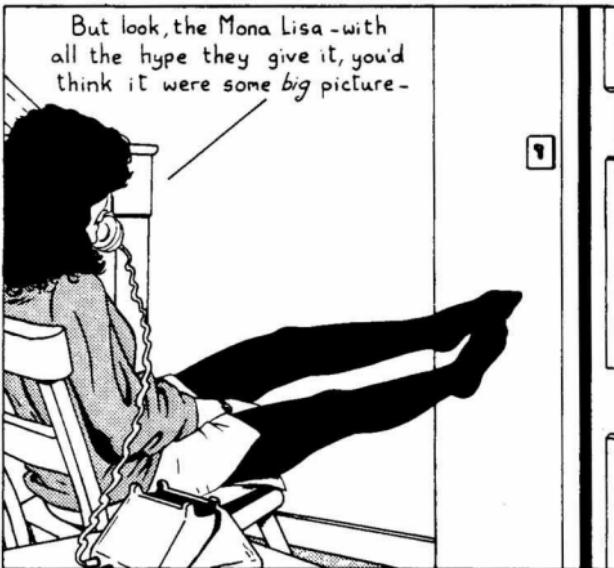
So while we're in Paris, like, Mum has to check out the Louvre, of course --



Yeah - you know my Mum.



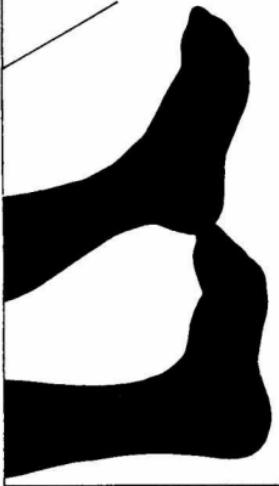
But look, the Mona Lisa - with all the hype they give it, you'd think it were some big picture -



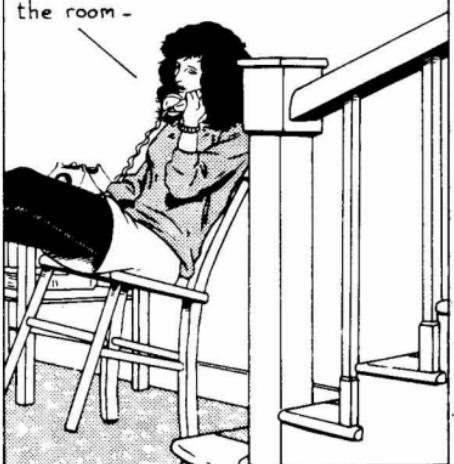
You won't believe it, but it's just a tiny little thing - you could sneak it out under your jumper -



As for that face, hee hee - What a dog!



I will say one thing though - it's true like they say - the eyes really do follow you about the room -



But then so do Jan Leeming's when she's reading the autocue .



BRAND NEW B.D.

This is a selection of some of the larger circulation strip magazines worldwide. Please send information to the Editors no later than April 11th 1983.

All the European magazines are in their respective languages, but don't let that put you off discovering what they're like.

● AMERICA

RAW 5 — is out now in the States. The main features are: 'War of the Trenches' by Jacques Tardi, from the French magazine, **A Suivre**; a 24 page chapter of 'Maus' by Editor Art Spiegelman; and Pascal Doury's 'Theodore Death-Head' from the French album published by Futuropolis. This sexually explicit story is printed without the censored sections. Readers fill out a card certifying they're over 18 and these parts are mailed to them to stick in place. There is also a newsprint comic supplement, similar to the traditional Sunday section, with all-new work, and a 1940 7-page strip by the underrated Fletcher Hanks, 'Stardust the Superwizard'. Add to that Charles Burns, Kaz, Bob Zowell and Sue Coe and a cover by Ever Meulen.

RAW, published twice a year, is available from the I.C.A. and Virgin Bookshops, Forbidden Planet and other similar outlets, or direct from RAW Books, 27 Greene Street, New York, NY 10013 (\$11 for 2 issues).

RAW ONE-SHOT — No. 1, Gary Panter's **Jimbo** can be ordered from the above for \$3.50. No. 2 will be Jacques Tardi's latest, **Cockroach Murderer**, written by Benjamin Legrand.

DEAD STORIES — starring Amy and Jordan Tilsdale in strips drawn over the last few years, is the latest from Mark Beyer, P.O. Box 2304, Allentown, Pennsylvania 18100. (\$4.00 plus \$1.00 postage).

HEAVY METAL — in January 83 ran Charles Burns' 'Robot Love' six pager.

NATIONAL LAMPOON — now includes new Zippy the Pinhead stories by Bill Griffith. Both cost £1.50

RIP OFF COMIX II — translates an early Joost Swarte strip, a tribute to Herge, creator of Tintin.

● BRITAIN

KNOCKABOUT 5 — Britain's Underground comic, should be out this March. Hunt Emerson provides the cover and a 15 page spy story starring a Be-Bop saxophonist, 'Max Zillion'. Other contributors include Gibson, Harper, Matthews, Poketek, Szostek and S. Clay Wilson. **KNOCKABOUT 5** is distributed by Knockabout Comics, 249 Kensal Road, London W10 price 95 pence plus postage. They also supply **RIP OFF COMIX**, price £2.50 plus postage.

WARRIOR 9 — is their first bi-monthly issue due to minor problems with their U.S. distributors. Highlights are the original Alan Moore scripts (voted Britain's Best by the Society of Strip Illustration) particularly on 'V for Vendetta' drawn by David Lloyd. 10 has a cover painted by Gary Leach. 50 pence a copy.

COSMOPOLITAN — is running new Posy Simmonds pages every month from Jan

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS — has followed **The Mail on Sunday's** success by introducing a cartoon section with old perennials, Rupert, Asterix and Bristow.

● FRANCE

A SUIVRE 60 — concludes the latest BD Roman (Strip Novel) of the reflective detective, Alack Sinner, by Munoz and Sampayo (**RAW 2** features a story-strip by them in English.) 100 pages a month, mainly serials and some short stories

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METAL HURLANT 83 — includes a 32-page **3D** section, taken mainly from the **Amazing 3D** Book and **National Lampoon's 3D** issue from 1975. (Almost pipped at the post — see next issue news, page 54). **No. 84** features a Phil Perfect strip by Serge Clerc. Yves Chaland's 'Le Jeune Albert' (Young Albert) appears regularly as a half page. These two and other BD magazines are on sale at Hachette's French Bookshop in Warwick Street, London W1, just off Regent Street.

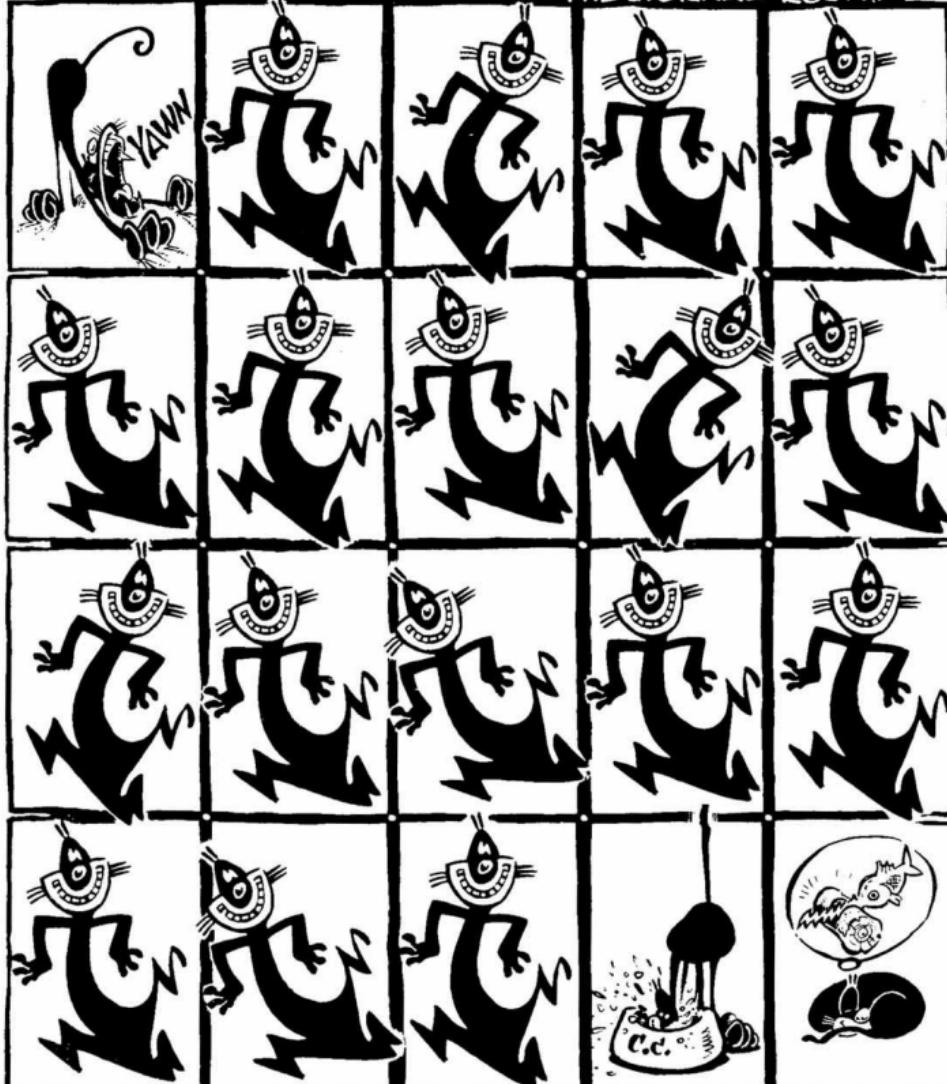
● SPAIN

EL VIBORA 37/38 — (The Viper), Spain's most popular and outrageous comic, has just celebrated its third Birthday with a special double-issue including: Marti's 'Taxi Driver', now translated in **RIP OFF**; Jorge Luis Borges' 'El Escondetras' (The Hidebehind) adapted by Max; and 16 pages of colour, by Joost Swarte from his **Modern Art** book, and Tamburini and Liberatore from Italy on their wildly violent 'Ranxerox'.

EL VIBORA is obtainable only from the publishers — for more details write to us.

COSMOPOLITAN and **THE SUNDAY EXPRESS** are a bit easier to find! ●

CALCULUS CAT THE DIURNAL ROUND



= HUNT EMERSON

BY BRIAN HUGHES

NO RUM



||||| ESCAPE INTO SUMMER |||||

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COMING SOON



With Introductions by
Brian Bolland and Alan Moore



▲ **PAUL BIGNELL** — This shadowy individual ritually burnt all his previous work one night, circa 1978/79 and has never looked back. He's keen on DC eighty page giants, Japanese robots and 'The Creature from the Black Lagoon'. He is currently developing 'Bigvision', our 3D BD process for issue two. He has appeared in *Balloon* comics, *Chain Reaction*, *Knockabout* and *Trash*.

● **EDDIE CAMPBELL** — Wasn't sure about this idea of biographical notes. *'Nix on the self-portrait. This is supposed to be serious'*. He studied with Brian Bolland at Central School of Art. Influences — French Impressionist painting and the writers Henry Miller and Jack Kerouac. He has self-published **Reality Advertiser** and **Behindsight**; his latest work is in *Fast Fiction* and *Blues*.



▲ **PHIL ELLIOTT** — Edits the ever-improving *Fast Fiction* with Ian Wieczorek. They started one of the earliest small press stripzines in the seventies called *Ellipse*, which ran for three issues. After college, Phil worked at a printers and now lives in Maidstone.

● **HUNT EMERSON** — Has been knocking around for some time. He's one of the founder members of Birmingham's Arts Lab Press. 'I

used to sit with yippy bedlam going on around me and draw two or three of these a night. Ah me! Them was the days!' Still in Birmingham, Hunt draws regularly for *Knockabout* and *Fiesta*

- **MYRA HANCOCK** — Woman of mystery, went to Hornsey College of Art and takes her Romance seriously, publishes her own line of **MYRA** magazines and now postcards! She has exhibited slide-shows at the I.C.A. — 'Sharon and Maureen' (1981) and 'Gavin and Miranda' (1982).
- **DAVE HARWOOD** — Published one issue of *RDH* comics (1972) with early Brian Bolland work. He is the regular artist on 'HMS Conqueror' the space opera serial in Martin Lock's **BEM** magazine. He lives in Southend on Sea.
- **RIAN HUGHES** — Is studying at London College of Printing and this is his first time in print. 'Huckleberry Hound' and other Hanna Barbera cartoons are his great favourites. His current hobby is turning up at parties.
- **BOB JOHNSON** — Production Manager on *Coke Oven Managers' Yearbook*. Latent Choreographer and writer of plays for TV and Radio. Though of decrepitulous aspect he remains in the Eighties shrewd, forceful, with uncannily correct reasoning, owning a mind both cold and merciless, yet demanding of admiration.

● **PAUL JOHNSON** — Is likely to be found sitting in the dark, perhaps at the NFT. He enjoys French, Japanese and Russian films. Two of his full-colour strips appeared in **pssst!** magazine and he has completed a book of them entitled *Dead Ends, I'm into Godard and Foucault, so you won't be able to understand my strips in a few years time!*



▲ **SHAKY KANE** — Thinks comics should be low-brow and stay clear of the coffee table. Early work appeared in *Station Alien*. Now writing songs for his band 'Network'. The number one spot for 'The Butane Boys'. ●



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BRITISH MANUFACTURE

PAUL BIGNELL — EDDIE CAMPBELL — PHIL ELLIOTT — HUNT EMERSON — MYRA HANCOCK
DAVE HARWOOD — RIAN HUGHES — BOB JOHNSON — PAUL JOHNSON and SHAKY KANE

MYSTERY AND WONDER

WITH BAZOOKA JOE

AND WILSON

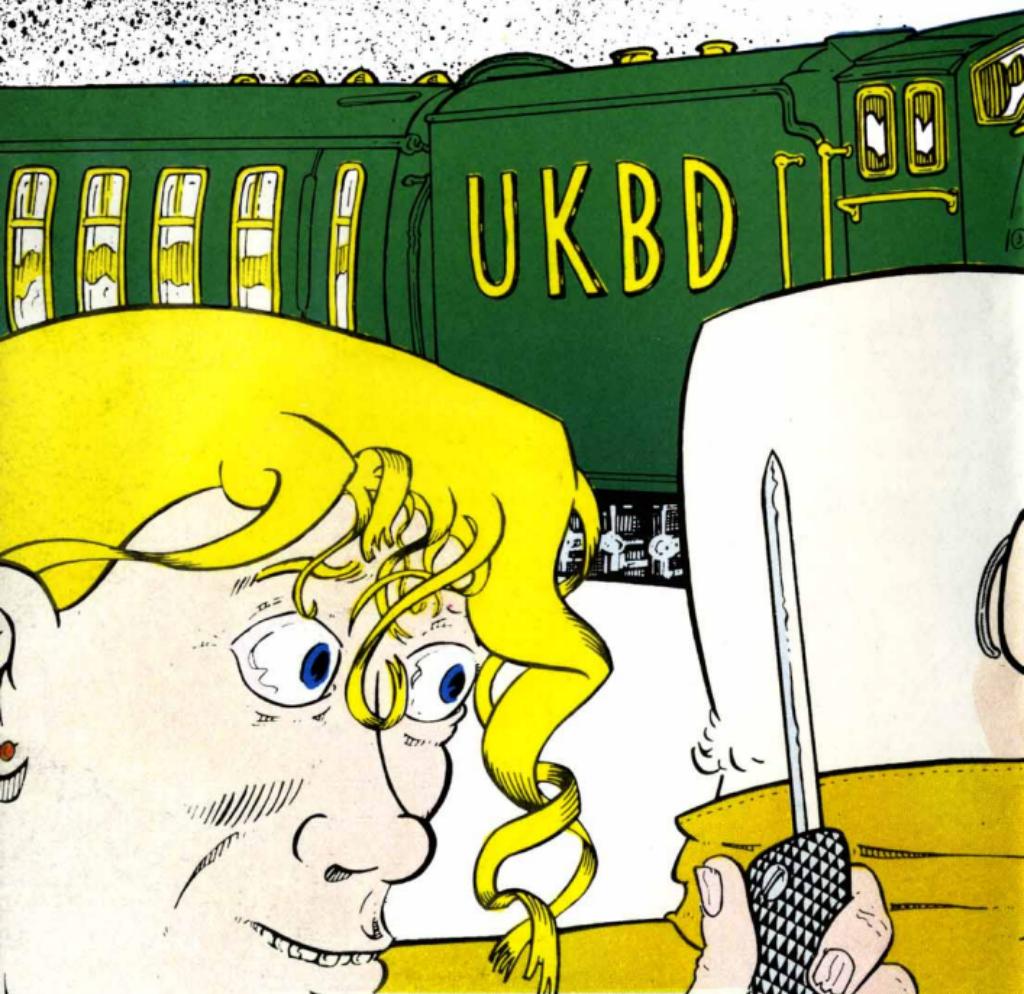
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